



Notice to blood drive coordinators and blood drive sponsors about improvements to the Health History Questionnaire, **Effective March 21, 2005.**

What is changing?

- Some blood donor eligibility criteria have changed – **most of these criteria changes will allow more people to donate, not less.** Changes have occurred regarding travel outside the United States, heart-related conditions, corneal transplants, tattoos and more (*see reverse side for more details*).
- **We have a new donor questionnaire featuring revised, simplified questions** (*see reverse side*). Our new questionnaire – also called the Blood Donor Record – is the American Association of Blood Banks standard and is used in blood donor centers across the country.
- **The materials all donors are required to read before they donate has new information.** This new information includes a summary of the criteria changes that will impact the donors, a medication deferral list and updated donation information.

How does this affect me?

- Initially, because it's a new process for everyone, it may take a little longer for donors to get through the health history process. Once the questionnaire is complete, the donation process will proceed as usual.
- Since some of the criteria have changed, all questions about the required reading or questionnaire should be referred to a member of our collections staff rather than a volunteer. If your blood drive has volunteers at it, this may change their role a little.
- We are modifying our recruitment materials to reflect these changes. During the recruitment process, your Red Cross representative will work with you to inform your donors of the changes.
- If you have questions or concerns about the changes, please call your Red Cross representative.

When will I start seeing these changes?

- All blood drives will use the new criteria and questionnaire beginning March 21.

Why are we changing?

- The new questions are simpler and easier to understand, and donors should be able to answer them more accurately and more quickly.

Significant Changes

Important: If a donor has attempted to donate prior to March 21, 2005 and was deferred under the old guidelines, but is now eligible under the new guidelines, **he or she must call Donor Suitability at 1-800-294-3347 to begin the reinstatement process.** A donor **MUST** call Donor Suitability prior to attending a blood drive or visiting a blood donor center to begin donating again.

Donation restriction changes for tattoos

- Beginning March 21, 2005, any person who has been tattooed in a state-licensed facility will be able to donate.

Donation restriction changes for travel

- The information sheet and criteria relating to variant Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (vCJD), the human form of Mad Cow Disease, were changed to reflect the FDA's most current thinking on geographic areas where there is a potential risk of Mad Cow disease. **Therefore, those who were previously deferred may be eligible to donate once again.**
- Beginning on March 21, 2005, you may be able to donate blood again if your total stay has been less than:
 - 5 years** (was 6 months) in Europe and eastern Europe since Jan. 1, 1980, OR
 - 3 months** in the United Kingdom from Jan. 1, 1980 through **Dec. 31, 1996** OR
 - 6 months** as a member of the **U.S. military**, on or associated with a military base in:
 - Belgium, the Netherlands (Holland) or Germany – from 1980 through 1990
 - Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Italy or Greece – from 1980 through 1996.

Example of simplified questions

Beginning March 21, 2005, the questions will be simpler and easy to understand. The following is an example of simplifying questions:

- Before, questions 17 and 18 read:*** In the past 3 years, have you lived outside the US, except Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, or Western Europe, including the British Isles? In the past 12 months, have you traveled outside the US, except Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, or Western Europe, including the British Isles?
- After:*** In the past three years, have you been outside the United States or Canada?

Some of the health-related criteria changes

- Heart conditions**
 - The condition was diagnosed more than 6 months ago, evaluated and treated.
 - There have been no symptoms for the past 6 months.
 - There have been no restrictions on routine activities for the past 6 months.
 - There have been no cardiac surgery/procedures during the past 6 months.
- Corneal transplant**
 - A person can donate as long as his or her corneal transplant was more than 12 months ago.
- Cancer**
 - You may donate if the cancer was treated with surgery, radiation or chemotherapy, and it has been at least five years since treatment was completed with no cancer recurrence. If you had leukemia or lymphoma, including Hodgkin's Disease and mycosis fungoids, you are not eligible to donate. Some low-risk cancers, including squamous or basal cell cancers of the skin, do not require a five-year waiting period.